

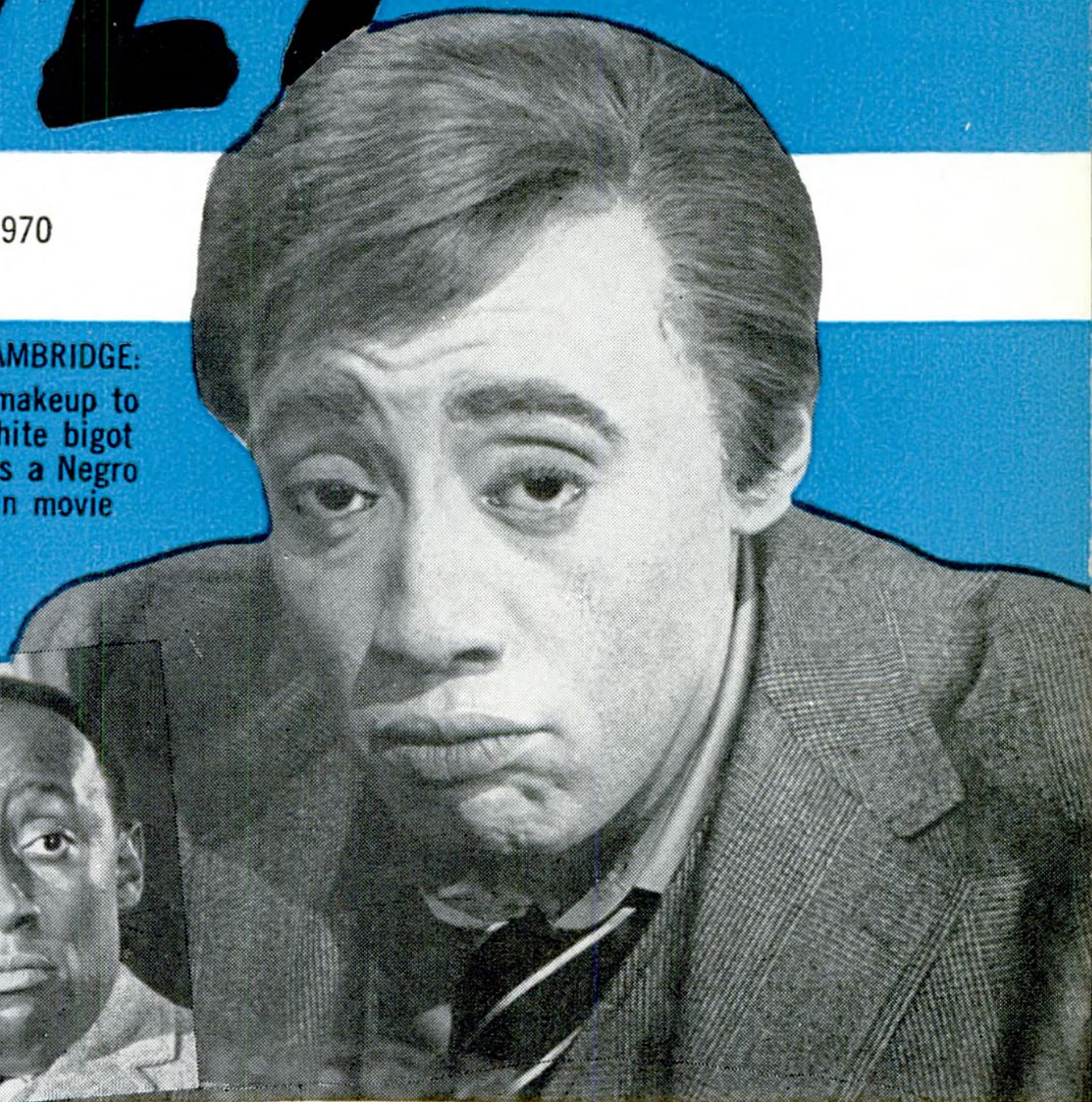
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JET

**BLACKS RALLY TO
FIGHT OPPRESSION
IN CAIRO, ILL.**

MARCH 5, 1970

GODFREY CAMBRIDGE:
Actor dons makeup to
portray a white bigot
who becomes a Negro
overnight in movie



BLACK ACTOR PLAYS ROLE OF WHITE RACIST



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STUDIO WANTS TO CHANGE TITLE TO

By JAMES GOODRICH

"One of the most comical performances" ever seen on the wide screen is how Hollywood insiders describe actor-comedian Godfrey Cambridge's role as a white man who turns black and then finds himself in all kinds of zany situations in Columbia Pictures' *The Night The Sun Came Out*.

No other film had a more bizarre casting than the Bennett-Mirell-Van Peebles production in which a black plays a white who becomes a black for some unknown reason. The picture has another distinction too: a Negro—Melvin Peebles, whose France-made film, *The Story Of A Three-Day Pass*, won wide critical acclaim—directed it.

Cambridge, making his debut as a feature film star, plays Jeff Gerber, a hustling, middle-class, big-city insurance salesman with some glaring idiosyncrasies. When he turns into a black man overnight, the hilarity begins to flow in what the studio calls a "colorful film with a 'way-



Posing as he appeared in President's Analyst, Cambridge later sits sullenly in white face in role of white bigot.

'WATERMELON MAN'; STAR SAYS NO



Observing the transformation of skin color from black to white, Cambridge portrays bigoted insurance salesman.

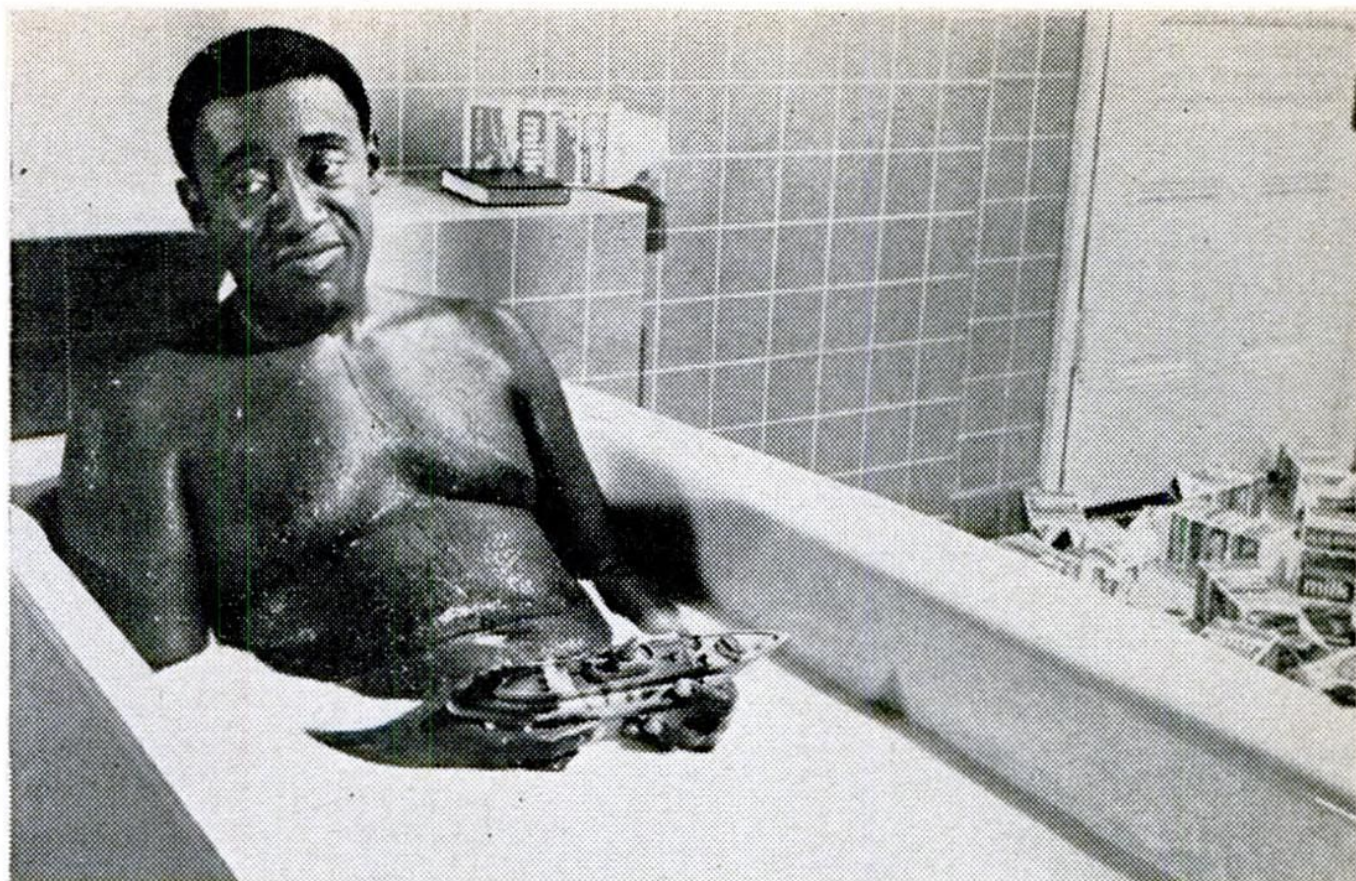
Black Is Beautiful; But So Is White: Cambridge

out' story line." One reviewer claims the comedy-farce by Herman Raucher "is sprinkled with some of the funniest lines of dialogue ever to be heard on, or off, the screen." Columbia is billing the production as a "laugh-a-minute picture that should appeal to everyone with a sense of humor."

But the erstwhile portly Cambridge has his own ideas about what people the picture is styled to please. "This picture will appeal particularly to those persons who find no difference in a man's race, creed or color," said the funnyman, adding jokingly: "That is, of course, unless they is 'color-blind.'" Cambridge also has his own ideas about what the picture ought to be titled (he wants to retain *The Night The Sun Came Out*, the studio reportedly plans to change it to *The Watermelon Man*, its original title). It is Cambridge's contention that *The Watermelon Man* would be "degrading and offensive" to blacks; and he has warned the studio he will not make any promotional in-person ap-



Cambridge relaxes as makeup men Hank Edds and Ben Lane (center) and Virginia D'Arcy apply white.



Playing with a toy ship while soaking in tub full of milk, Cambridge, as Jeff Gerber, hopes skin will become white again.

pearances to plug the picture if the title is switched. One thing Columbia has promised: the content of the film will remain the same as when Cambridge filmed it.

His role in *The Night The Sun Came Out* casts him as a fun-loving guy who thinks he's very popular. Actually, he is not too well liked except by his liberal-thinking wife (Estelle Parsons) and two children (Scott Garrett and Erin Moran). In his day-to-day grind, Jeff Gerber does not concern himself with the racial turmoil around him. Then, one morning he awakes to find that he has turned into a black man—and he runs head-on into the darkest days of his life. After his wife leaves him and takes the children with her, he begins to see himself in a new light. He eventually finds the true meaning of being black but he has to live some screwball experiences before he can adjust to his new status.

When Cambridge completed filming on *The Night The Sun Came Out*, he summed up the message he got from the picture. "Black is beautiful; but so is white."